## CLAIMS

I claim:

1   1.    A vacation request processing system comprising:

2       logic configured to provide a workload estimate comprising at least a first

3   workload statistic that is used to operate a first call center;

4       logic configured to provide a vacation eligibility criteria based on at least a

5   first rule; and

6       logic configured to process the vacation request of a first employee based on

7   the workload estimate and the vacation eligibility criteria.

1   2.    The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2   estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over

3   a first period of time.

1   3.    The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2   estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over

3   a first period of time, and wherein the estimated volume of telephone calls is derived

4   from historical call volume data obtained from a communications switch.

1   4.    The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2   expected number of operators needed to operate the first call center during a first

3   period of time.

1   5.    The system of claim 1, wherein the first workload statistic is derived from

2   telephone call data stored in a database of a POTS switch.

1   6.    The system of claim 1, wherein the first rule is derived from an employment

2   grade of the first employee, and wherein the employment grade comprises at least one

3   of a payscale and a length of service of the first employee.

1   7.    The system of claim 1, wherein the workload estimate is provided to the first

2   call center in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly

3    basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis,  a quarterly basis, a semi-annual

4    basis, and an annual basis.

1    8.    The system of claim 7, wherein the vacation eligibility criteria is provided in a

2    timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily basis,

3    a weekly basis, a monthly basis,  a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an annual

4    basis.

1    9.    The system of claim 1, wherein logic configured to process the vacation

2    request comprises:

3        logic configured to receive the vacation request of the first employee;

4        logic configured to deny the vacation request due to a lack of vacation

5    availability at a time of the vacation request; and

6        logic configured to grant the vacation request due to a vacation availability at

7    a time after the vacation request was denied.

1    10.    The system of claim 9, wherein granting the vacation request comprises

2    transmitting an e-mail to the first employee.

1    11.    A method of processing a vacation request, the method comprising:

2        providing a workload estimate comprising at least a first workload statistic

3    that is used to operate a first call center;

4        providing a vacation eligibility criteria based on at least a first rule; and

5        processing the vacation request of a first employee based on the workload

6    estimate and the vacation eligibility criteria.

1    12.    The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2    estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over

3    a first period of time.

1    13.    The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2    estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over

3    a first period of time, and wherein the estimated volume of telephone calls is derived

4    from historical call volume data obtained from a communications switch.

1    14.    The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2    expected number of operators needed to operate the first call center during a first

3    period of time.

1    15.    The method of claim 11, wherein the first workload statistic is derived from

2    telephone call data stored in a database of a POTS switch.

1    16.    The method of claim 11, wherein the first rule is derived from an employment

2    grade of the first employee, and wherein the employment grade comprises at least one

3    of a payscale and a length of service of the first employee.

1    17.    The method of claim 11, wherein the workload estimate is provided to the first

2    call center in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly

3    basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis,  a quarterly basis, a semi-annual

4    basis, and an annual basis.

1    18.    The method of claim 17, wherein the vacation eligibility criteria is provided in

2    a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily

3    basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis,  a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an

4    annual basis.

1    19.    The method of claim 11, wherein processing the vacation request comprises:

2            receiving the vacation request of the first employee;

3            denying the vacation request due to a lack of vacation availability at a time of

4    the vacation request; and

5            granting the vacation request due to a vacation availability at a time after the

6    vacation request was denied.

1    20.    The method of claim 19, wherein granting the vacation request comprises

2    transmitting an e-mail to the first employee.

1    21.    The system of claim 11, further comprising:

2            means for receiving the vacation request of the first employee;

3    means for denying the vacation request due to a lack of vacation availability at

4 a time of the vacation request; and

5    means for granting the vacation request due to a vacation availability at a time

6 after the vacation request was denied.

1 22.  A vacation request processing system stored on a computer-readable medium,

2 the system comprising:

3    computer-readable code that provides a workload estimate comprising at least

4 a first workload statistic that is used to operate a first call center;

5    computer-readable code that provides a vacation eligibility criteria based on

6 at least a first rule; and

7    computer-readable code that processes the vacation request of a first employee

8 based on the workload estimate and the vacation eligibility criteria.

1 23.  The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2 estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over

3 a first period of time.

1 24.  The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2 estimated volume of telephone calls that the first call center is expected to handle over

3 a first period of time, and wherein the estimated volume of telephone calls is derived

4 from historical call volume data obtained from a communications switch.

1 25.  The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic comprises an

2 expected number of operators needed to operate the first call center during a first

3 period of time.

1 26.  The system of claim 22, wherein the first workload statistic is derived from

2 telephone call data stored in a database of a POTS switch.

1 27.  The system of claim 22, wherein the first rule is derived from an employment

2 grade of the first employee, and wherein the employment grade comprises at least one

3 of a payscale and a length of service of the first employee.

1   28.    The system of claim 22, wherein the workload estimate is provided to the first

2   call center in a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly

3   basis, a daily basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual

4   basis, and an annual basis.

1   29.    The system of claim 28, wherein the vacation eligibility criteria is provided in

2   a timely basis, the timely basis comprising at least one of an hourly basis, a daily

3   basis, a weekly basis, a monthly basis, a quarterly basis, a semi-annual basis, and an

4   annual basis.

1   30.    The method of system 22, wherein computer-readable code that processes the

2   vacation request comprises:

3         computer-readable code that receives the vacation request of the first

4   employee;

5         computer-readable code that denies the vacation request due to a lack of

6   vacation availability at a time of the vacation request; and

7         computer-readable code that grants the vacation request due to a vacation

8   availability at a time after the vacation request was denied.

1   31.    The system of claim 30, wherein in granting the vacation request computer-

2   readable code transmits an e-mail to the first employee.